

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 165196
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:S/S-O:DROBINSON

APPROVED BY:S/S-O:DROBINSON

-----082121 291025Z /14

R 290503Z JUN 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO OAU COLLECTIVE

S E C R E T STATE 165196

EXDIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM ABIDJAN DATED JUNE 28, 1978
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO ALGIERS, DAKAR, LAGOS, LONDON,
PARIS, RABAT, USUN NEW YORK IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T ABIDJAN 6189/1

EXDIS

DEPT REPEAT OAU COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CF, XA, XJ, IV

SUBJ: U.S. AFRICAN POLICY: SHABA, SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVE-
MENT

REF: A. STATE 153145, B. DAKAR 1329, C. PARIS 20055,
D. ABIDJAN 5847, E. ABIDJAN 5783

1. SUMMARY: THE SPLIT AMONG AFRICAN STATES ABOUT HOW
TO SOLVE AFRICAN PROBLEMS WILL INEVITABLY AFFECT OUR CON-
SULTATIONS WITH SENIOR AFRICAN LEADERS. MODERATES AND
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PROGRESSIVES EXPECT DIFFERENT THINGS FROM U.S. POLICY AND
FOR THIS REASON IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE FORMULATE CLEAR U.S.
PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES. EQUALLY IMPORTANT IS TO DECIDE
WHAT THE U.S. IS PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT
OF PREFERRED SOLUTIONS. ONLY THEN SHOULD WE PROCEED TO
CONSULT AFRICAN LEADERS ON A DISCREET BASIS.
END SUMMARY

2. IF THE AFRICANS ARE NOT TO "ESCAPE THE LESSON O SHABA" THERE WILL HAVE TO BE GREATER AGREEMENT THAN NOW EXIST ON WHAT THE LESSON IS. FOR THE OAU PROGRESSIVES THE LESSON IS THAT MOBUTU REAPS WHAT HE AND HIS WESTERN FRIENDS HAVE SOWN; FOR THE MODERATES IT IS THAT HE REAPS WHAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE SOWN. NEITHER GROUP WOULD NECESSARILY CONCEDE THAT THE AFRICANS THEMSELVES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SOVIET AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. ON THE CONTRARY, THE ONE THING ON WHICH AFRICAN PROGRESSIVES AND MODERATES WOULD BE APT TO AGREE IS THAT THE AMERICANS AND WESTERN EUROPEANS MADE A COMMUNIST ROLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA INEVITABLE BY TOLERATING-EVEN AIDING7THE MINORITY GOVERNMENTS THAT AFRICANS HAVE BEEN STRUGGLING SO LONG TO REPLACE.

3. FROM THIS SHARED PERCEPTION OF WESTERN RESPONSIBILITY MODERATES AND PROGRESSIVES DRAW DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED CONCLUSIONS. FOR NYERERE IT MAKES WESTERN PROTESTS ABOUT SOVIET/CUBAN ACITIVITIES UNJUSTIFIED AND HYPOCRITICAL; FOR HOUPHOUET IT MAKES WESTERN COUNTER-ACTION NOT ONLY JUSTIFIED BUT A MORAL OBLIGATION. THIS IS WHY FORMULATING A COMMON AFRICAN APPROACH TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS IS SO DIFFICULT AND WHY THE OAU IS SO OFTEN PARALYZES (ALTHOUGH WE WOULD ARGUE THAT ITS RECORD IS NO WORSE THAN THAT OF COUNTERPART ORGANIZATIONS WHEN IT COMES TO SOLVING REGIONAL DISPUTES). THIS IS ALSO WHY A NON-AFRICAN POWER LIKE

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THE UNITED STATES IS BOUND TO BE DISAPPOINTED AND PROBABLY MISUNDERSTOOD IF IT SEEKS TO DEVISE A POLICY EQUALLY GRATIFYING TO BOTH MODERATES AND PROGRESSIVES. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT WE ARE CONDEMNED TO UNQUALIFIED ALIGNMENT WITH ONE GROUP OF AFRICAN STATES OR ANOTHER. IT IS TO SUGGEST HOWEVER THAT U.S. POLICY INVOLVES CHOICES AND PREFERENCES IN AFRICA AS IT DOES ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD AND THAT BEFORE WE CONSULT WITH AFRICAN LEADERS ON AFRICAN PROBLEM SOLVING WE HAD BETTER MAKE UP OUR OWN MINDS ABOUT WHAT KIND OF AFRICAN SOLUTIONS WE FAVOR. THE CHOICE IS AS WIDE AND DIVERSE AS THE PROBLEMS THEMSELVES AND NOT ALL OF THE POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS ARE EQUALLY CONSISTENT WITH U.S. INTERESTS IN AFRICA.

4. INDEED THE PROBLEMS CITED BY DICK MOOSE (PARA 3 OF REFTEL A) ILLUSTRATE THE POINT CLEARLY. TO CONSULT USEFULLY WITH AN AFRICAN LEADER LIKE HOUPHOUIT ON SHABA AND THE CONCEPT OF AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE WE MUST BE PREPARED TO ADDRESS THE QUESTIONS UPPERMOST IN HIS MIDE: DOES U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE SHABA AIRLIFT MEAN THAT WE ARE READY TO PARTICIPATE IN OTHER JOINT EFFORTS TO LIMIT SOVIET/CUBAN MILITARY AND PARAMILITARY ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA? IF SO,

WHAT KINDS OF ASSISTANCE IS THE U.S. PREPARED TO SUPPLY NOT TO A PAN-AFRICAN FORCE UNDER OAU AUSPICES-WHICH HOUPHOUET CONSIDERS TOTALLY UNREALISTIC- BUT TO A REGIONAL, ESSENTIALLY FRANCOPHONE FORCE OF MODERATES? AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO AIDING A CEAO FORCE OF THIS KIND WOULD THE U.S. BE PREPARED TO SUPPLY HARDWARE OR OTHER ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUAL CEAO STATES WHO WOULD EARMARK UNITS FOR DEPLOYMENT IN A MULTILATERAL FORCE UNDER CERTAIN CONTINGENCIES? (THIS CONCEPT WAS SKETCHED RECENTLY BY FOREIGN MINISTER AKE AND REPORTED IN ABIDJAN'S 5847). IF THE U.S. IS NOT WILLING TO INVOLVE ITSELF DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY IN STRENGTHENING THE DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY OF THE MODERATES, WHAT COURSES OF ACTION DO WE RECOMMEND THEY TAKE TO COUNTER WHAT THEY SEE AS A GROWING SOVIET/CUBAN THREAT?

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5. THE LATTER QUESTION REALLY CONSTITUTES THE BOTTOM LINE IN ANY CONSULTATION WITH AFRICAN LEADERS, MODERATE OR PROGRESSIVE. IF WE REGARD SOVIET/CUBAN MILITARY AND PARAMILITARY ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA AS A THREAT THEN IT IS UNLIKELY THAT RECOURSE TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL OR THE CREATION OF REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS WILL BE AN ADEQUATE RESPONSE. IF ON THE OTHER HAND WE REGARD THE FEARS OF LEADERS LIKE HOUPHOUET AND SENGHOR TO BE EXAGGERATED THAT ALSO CREATES CERTAIN IMPERATIVES FOR U.S. POLICY AND WE SHOULD BE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGING THE MODERATES TO THINK LESS IN TERMS OF STRENGTHENING THEIR DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY AND MORE IN TERMS OF ACCOMMODATION. IN SHORT, CHALLENGING THE AFRICANS TO FIND AFRICAN SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS IS SOMETHING WHICH, PARADOXICALLY, WE CAN DO MOST EFFECTIVELY IF WE HAVE PREFERRED AMERICAN SOLUTIONS CLEARLY IN MIND.

6. ONLY WHEN THAT PROCESS HAS BEEN COMPLETED, WHEN, THAT IS, WE HAVE DECIDED EXACTLY WHAT WE FAVOR AND HOW FAR WE ARE PREPARED TO GO TO BRING IT ABOUT, SHOULD WE CONSULT WITH SENIOR AFRICAN LEADERS ABOUT SPECIFIC COURSES OF COMMON OR MUTUALLY SUPPORTING ACTION. IT APPEARS TO US OVERLY OPTIMISTIC TO THINK THIS COULD BE DONE BEFORE THE KHARTOUM SUMMIT MEETING IN MID-JULY. WHENEVER IT IS DONE WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE CONSULTATIONS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED AS DISCREETLY AS POSSIBLE IN KEEPING WITH OUR DESIRE TO ENCOURAGE AFRICAN INITIATIVES AND TO AVOID CREATING UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF AN AMERICAN DEUS EX MACHINA (REFTEL E).
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, INTERVENTION, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE165196
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:DROBINSON
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780268-1131
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978067/aaaaafx.tel
Line Count: 166
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1956d18a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 153145, 78 DAKAR 1329, 78 PARIS 20055, 78 ABIDJAN 5847, 78 ABIDJAN 5783
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2390367
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S. AFRICAN POLICY: SHABA, SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVE- MENT
TAGS: PEPR, CF, XA, XJ, IV, US, UR, CU
To: OAU COLLECTIVE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1956d18a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014